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Staff photo by Mike Fender

Trucking firm employees are checked by paramedics.

Toxic spill sends 29 workers to hospital

By BARBARA ANDERSON

Sun Staff Writer

FONTANA — Vapors from a toxic resin solution sent 29 employees of the PIE Ryder truck terminal to hospitals for observation and treatment Wednesday morning, fire officials said.

Three men who were exposed to the chemical remained under observation Wednesday evening at Ontario Community Hospital, hospital officials said.

Two of the three — including a 61-year-old with a history of cardiac problems — were said to be in fair condition in the intensive care unit.

Hospital officials declined to give names or other information about the men until relatives had been notified.

Treated and released were eight employees taken by Mercy Ambulance to Ontario Community; six workers taken to San Antonio Community Hospital in Upland; and 11 employees taken to Loma Linda University Medical Center.

Crews from Central Valley Fire Protection District were called to the truck terminal at 11153 Mulberry Ave. about 10 a.m. when employees began complaining of dizziness and nausea, said fire Capt. Gary Becks.

The cause of the employees' sickness was a 55-gallon drum of a xylene acrylic resin solution, Becks said.

The drum had been punctured by the prong of a forklift as a forklift driver was removing it from a truck trailer, he said.

The drum was left inside the trailer, but about 30 gallons of the resin, used in automobile paint, spilled onto the floor of the trailer and leaked through the trailer floor to the ground, Becks said.

The resin solution is highly



AP wirephoto

Matt Chambers sweeps up spilled substance.

flammable and produces toxic vapors, which is common with spilled flammable materials, he said.

Becks said firefighters from two Central Valley stations and the county's Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Team responded to the spill.

A private firm, Liquid Waste Management of Upland, was called to clean up the chemical, Becks said.

The resin was covered with a Styrofoam-type material to absorb the liquid and prevent it from spreading, Becks said. The absorbent material was then scooped up and put in drums for hauling to a toxic waste dump.

Becks said Ryder will be charged for the cost of the clean-up.

Nearby residents were not evacuated, he said.

About 500 people were evacuated from their homes last April and an evacuation center was set up at Fontana High School when a 55-gallon drum containing a gasoline preservative leaked about three gallons of its contents inside a truck trailer at the terminal. Ten employees were sent to the hospital for observation after inhaling those fumes.

Former SDA church official sues, claims Davenport case was handled improperly

By JIM NICKLES

Sun Staff Writer

A former official of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has filed a \$9 million lawsuit against his former employer, claiming he was fired for trying to correct church involvement in Donald Davenport's bankrupt real estate empire.

Reid Granke, a former financial officer for a Pacific Northwest church entity, contends church organizations and officials, through improper and illegal investment activities, violated

the 1970 federal Organized Crime Control Act, known as the RICO statute (for Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organization).

Granke says he was wrongfully fired for blowing the whistle on improper investments by church officials. He also said his wife was fired because of his dissidence within the church.

His lawsuit, filed in a federal district court in Missouri, alleges that church officers improperly invested millions of dollars in trust funds with Davenport, a Southern California surgeon who built post offices and telephone company buildings throughout the country.

The suit also claims church officials in the Pacific Northwest were involved in a scheme in which a church member made "sham" gifts of real estate to the church to avoid income taxes.

Davenport, a former member of the University Church of Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, filed for bankruptcy in 1981, owing Adventist organizations and individuals an estimated \$21 million. His total debts were listed at \$68 million.

In a telephone interview, Granke called Davenport a "fraud" who lured high-ranking church officers to invest church trust

funds in his real estate dealings by paying them exorbitant interest rates on personal loans.

"I feel that there's a lot of corruption within the church administration, particularly as it deals with the trust program," Granke said. "I feel that I have been permanently physically damaged — crippled — by it."

Granke, 40, now a resident of Madison, Wis., attributes a hearing disability he developed to the stress he experienced battling the church hierarchy.

The lawsuit, filed in January in U.S. District Court in Jefferson City, Mo., names as defendants six current and former Adventist officials.

Also named were the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the church's worldwide ruling body; the General Conference Corp., a separate legal entity; and the Spokane, Wash.-based Upper Columbia Corp. of Seventh-day Adventists.

The officials named included Richard Fearing, former Upper Columbia president and now president of the North Pacific Union Conference in Portland, Ore., and Walter Blehm, president of the Pacific Union Conference in Westlake Village near Los Angeles.

The 3.5-million member

church is divided up into regional conferences and unions.

Granke said he worked for the Upper Columbia Corp. from 1978 to 1982 as corporate treasurer, assistant trust director and corporate assistant secretary.

It was there, he said, that he discovered the alleged nursing home scam and problems with Upper Columbia Corp.'s loans to Davenport. Many of the loans were improperly secured, a violation of church guidelines, he said.

"When I tried to make corrections to these improper and illegal affairs, I ran into firm opposition (from superiors)," he said. "The stress on me, I believe, caused my hearing loss."

Both Fearing and Blehm declined comment on the case.

Attorneys for the General Conference have filed a response with the court denying the charges. They also contend the court lacks jurisdiction over the case.

Robert Nixon, a spokesman for the General Conference, said the complaint filed by Granke contains several inaccuracies regarding the organization and structure of the church.

"There are just so many factual errors in the basic complaint

(Please see Adventist, B-4)

NOS swap meet contract goes to Canning's firm

By CARL YETZER

Sun Staff Writer

SAN BERNARDINO — The National Orange Show board of directors Wednesday awarded a three-year contract to operate the weekly swap meets to the R.G. Canning Co., despite a competitor's claim that he submitted a higher bid.

The board's action, approved in a closed-door session, ratified a previous decision by its executive committee to award the contract to Canning.

In a letter addressed to board members and distributed at Wednesday's meeting, Tom Scharf, owner of C&S Investments and the previous swap meet operator, said he had offered the Orange Show about \$2,500 a week more than Canning will pay. Over the three-year life of the contract, he said, that represents a loss of about \$360,000 to the show.

Board President Jack Marks said Scharf's figures were incorrect, and that Scharf's proposal actually would have netted the show about \$1,000 a week less than the Canning offer.

Before his contract was terminated on Dec. 31, Scharf had been paying the Orange Show \$5,000 a week for use of the grounds, and he had offered to increase that to \$8,000 per week if the Orange Show extended his contract for 60 days.

But negotiations to extend the contract fell through and the Orange Show brought in the Canning Co. to operate the swap meets on an interim basis. Canning operates the Rose Bowl swap meet in Pasadena and similar meets in a half-dozen other Southern California communities.

In his letter, Scharf said he offered \$10,000 per day or 55 percent of the gross, whichever was less. He said Canning offered a flat \$5,500 per day.

But Marks said the Canning offer was \$6,000 a day the first year, \$7,000 a day the second year and \$8,000 a day the third.

In addition, he said, the Canning bid offered to pay the Orange Show half the agreed-upon rent for each day the swap

meet could not operate because of inclement weather. Scharf's proposal offered nothing for those dates, he said.

In his letter, Scharf estimated that, with a 15 percent growth in annual attendance, by the third year of his contract he would be paying about \$9,600 a day in rent.

"I find it difficult to believe," Scharf said in his letter, "that these losses are in the best interests of the (National Orange Show) or the people of the State of California... who will be asked to assume this burden as the (Orange Show) pursues its Master Plan objectives."

(The Orange Show receives an annual operating subsidy from the state Board of Fairs and Expositions.)

But Secretary-Manager Joe Brosmer said that, based on attendance figures obtained from Canning for the months of January and February, "Scharf's offer was inferior."

He said Scharf's proposal offered no way to verify actual attendance, meaning that Orange Show personnel would have to be involved in ticket selling and collection.

He also said the request for proposals required bidders to state "the exact dollar amount" the show would receive. Since Scharf's proposal offered a percentage against a flat amount, he said, it did not meet the bid requirements.

The board's action was taken in closed session at the request of its attorney, Bill Lemann, who said the matter could involve litigation. California's open meetings law requires agencies that receive public funds to conduct their business in open session except when they are discussing litigation and personnel.

Scharf has withdrawn his lawsuit against the Orange Show, and his letter did not indicate any plans to refile.

Attempts to reach Lemann after the meeting Wednesday were unsuccessful. His secretary said that he was expected to be in court all day.

School board endorses city park as school site

By FLOYD RINEHART

Sun Staff Writer

RIALTO — School board members said Wednesday they like the idea of a councilman to use another unimproved city park location as a new elementary school site.

Councilman John McClure suggested the Rialto Unified School District board consider use of the Andreson Park site in the 700 block of South Lilac Avenue as a school park.

The city and school district previously concluded a joint agreement for dual use of the 13-acre municipal Flores Park site for a new elementary school.

Located west of Cactus Avenue at the west end of Etiwanda Avenue, the new school and playground would occupy 10 acres, and the rest would become a neighborhood park. The playground would be open to the public when school is not in session.

McClure told board members a similar agreement may be worked out with the five-acre Andreson Park in the city's southwest section, where homeowners have pleaded for a new elementary school.

However, two contingencies were suggested by McClure. One was that the school should be named Andreson School in honor of the family who donated the land to Rialto.

A second necessity would be district acquisition of a five-acre parcel next to the city park property "since state regulations require (an elementary) school to be on a 10-acre site," McClure said.

He also said three other councilmen "are favorable to the suggestion."

Superintendent Robert Williams said the city parcel would save the district a minimum of \$125,000 in land costs.

Williams also said, "I've already been in touch with the owners of the land next to the park site and we're awaiting a response from them."

He recommended the board approve the concept.

Chairman Betty McDermott, speaking for the board said, "The board accepts the concept and appreciates your (McClure's) efforts."

In other action, the board accepted for study contract modification asked by the Rialto Education Association on behalf of teachers.

Association suggested changes are a 12.5 percent salary raise, removal of credit restrictions on teaching experience carried between districts, fully paid vision care insurance for teachers and dependents, increased paid sick leave and an extra \$200 pay at each of five incentive incremental steps.

On the latter point, Association President Robert Tarbaux said teachers who complete required professional course work receive added pay in service years 17, 20, 23, 26 and 29.

It presently amounts to \$450 a year. If the change proposal were accepted it would be \$650.

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Ed Mauel is on vacation...